Chicago, IL - After a six-day occupation of the plant which brought them nationwide attention, the Republic Windows and Doors workers met inside their factory Dec. 10, to vote on the settlement offer from their employer. A roomful of politicians watched and a knot of supporters waited for the results with great anticipation.

After a few minutes, the chants of “Sí se puede!” were heard in the halls and all the workers streamed out. Cheers went up. The settlement was announced: The Bank of America and CHASE had agreed to a $1.75 million loan. The workers will receive the eight weeks of pay due to them by the WARN act, two months of health insurance and their earned vacation pay.

Their cause had become a symbol of the anger that workers everywhere felt over the Wall Street bailout and the rising unemployment rate. Their fight was with an employer that was secretly setting up a low-wage factory in another state, but also with the Bank of America, which had received $25 billion in taxpayers’ bailout money.

Armando Robles, president of United Electrical workers Local 1110, remarked in summation, “You can do anything when you have the support of every one of your co-workers.” He added, “This is not a victory just for us. It is a victory for every worker in the country.”

Two years after the current financial crisis began, the situation has gone from bad to worse. What began with the failure of small mortgage lenders has toppled Wall Street investment banks, the largest mortgage company in the world and a trillion-dollar insurance firm. In October stock markets around the world tanked, bringing back memories of 1929. The economy continues to get worse month by month, as more than a million jobs have been lost and foreclosures continue to rise. More and more companies declare bankruptcy as consumers cut back on spending, especially on cars. State and local governments and school districts are cutting workers and services as their budget deficits grow. The crisis has spread around the world as banks fail, currencies crash and layoffs rise in Europe and Asia.

At each stage of the crisis the U.S. government and central bank have had to take bigger and bigger actions to try to stabilize the crisis. The Federal Reserve has loaned out about $700 billion to banks and other institutions, while the U.S. government has committed another $300 billion in loans and is putting $250 billion into banks and has another $450 billion committed to helping the financial sector. The auto industry is getting a $25 billion loan and the Federal Reserve is starting to provide loans to businesses. European and Asian nations are also putting hundreds of billions of dollars to shore up their banks and stock markets. But the economy continues to suffer as banks continue to hoard cash, with U.S. banks sitting on some $300 billion in ‘excess reserves’ that could be loaned out.

Almost everyone recognizes that the laissez-faire (free-market) policies of the Bush administration and former Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan contributed to the current financial crisis. But the roots of the crisis go much deeper than just the policies of Bush and Greenspan. The economic system of monopoly capitalism itself is the cause of the current crisis. Today giant multinational corporations - that produce more than they can sell - dominate the world economy. Even with advertising that invades every corner of our lives and easy credit, these corporations can produce more cars, steel, airplanes, etc. than can be sold.

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Make the Rich Pay For the Crisis

Crisis, continued from page 1

anti-union drive for 25 years, making it easier to cut wages and benefits. Their lobbying in Congress has led to cuts in welfare, the real minimum wage and unemployment benefits, forcing more and more workers to take low-paying jobs. They shamelessly exploit millions of new immigrants, even children, and call the ICE if the immigrant workers try to fight back. Corporations send their work to other countries, eliminating better paying jobs here in the United States. At the same time the workers in Asia and Latin America earn just a fraction of what the jobs were paying in the United States.

While this leads to ever-greater profits for a handful of the super-wealthy, it means that the masses of working people cannot afford to buy back what they have produced. This is not just a result of greedy CEOs (although there is no lack of them). This is a result of a drive for profit that is part and parcel of capitalism. Under a capitalist economic system, production is social - with hundreds and thousands of workers contributing to the production, distribution and sale of goods and services - while the means of production (factories, transport and stores) are privately owned, with the profits flowing to a small capitalist class. This contradiction is at the root of economic crisis under capitalism.

With a lack of investment opportunities in the production of goods and services, profits have flowed into a financial sector that has been growing like a cancer the last 30 years. Today there are more than $600 trillion in financial derivatives such as Collateralized Debt Obligations, etc. whose value is 40 times the entire U.S. economy. Banks and corporations are turning all this capital to keep the economy running.

The government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac was in part to calm the fears of other countries, which have lent Fannie and Freddie more than $1.5 trillion. The Bush administration needs to borrow more than $500 billion in November and December alone to help pay for the bank bailout, with most of this coming from foreign countries.

In the face of growing cuts at the state and local level, our focus needs to be building a grassroots movement that can fight for the economy running. The government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac was in part to calm the fears of other countries, which have lent Fannie and Freddie more than $1.5 trillion. The Bush administration needs to borrow more than $500 billion in November and December alone to help pay for the bank bailout, with most of this coming from foreign countries.

The crisis has made it painfully clear how much the U.S. relies on foreign capital to keep the economy running. The government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac was in part to calm the fears of other countries, which have lent Fannie and Freddie more than $1.5 trillion. The Bush administration needs to borrow more than $500 billion in November and December alone to help pay for the bank bailout, with most of this coming from foreign countries.

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WHERE WE STAND

This newspaper exists to build the people’s struggle! We provide coverage and analysis of some of the key battles facing working and low-income people.

We are not ‘neutral’ or ‘even-handed’ in our coverage. We are opposed to exploitation, discrimination and oppression. We hold that the rich class of people, who run the economy and government of this country, are unfit to rule. We support all movements that challenge their power and privilege.

The writers and staff of Fight Back! are activists and organizers - in the trade unions, low-income community, oppressed nationality movements, on the campuses and in other people’s movements. We welcome articles, letters, comments and criticisms. Some of us working to put out this paper are members of Freedom Road Socialist Organization. Articles represent the views of the people and organizations that author them.

For the time being, Fight Back! is being published five times a year.

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Fight Back! photo by Kim DeFranco

FIGHT BACK! News on the scene of the people’s struggle

Boots Riley of the Coup and Hatem Abudayyeh with a special edition of Fight Back! at the Republican National Convention protests.

Fight Back! News on the scene of the people’s struggle

The crisis has made it even clearer for all to see that both the Republicans and Democrats are parties of big business. Both parties’ leadership and presidential candidates supported the $700 billion bailout for bankers and billionaires. Having said that, the defeat of the Republicans in the elections was a repudiation of their leadership on deregulating the economy into crisis at home and charging into war abroad. A massive popular outrage had the power to derail the bi-partisan bank bailout plan, at least temporarily. We need an organized, massive people’s movement that can pressure Democrats in power to grant more reforms that benefit working people. At the same time we need to show more and more people that Democrats are not for real economic change. Only socialism can bring that about.

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**MINNESOTA**

**Protest Demands a People’s Bailout**

By staff

St. Paul, MN - While state officials announced a record $5.2 billion dollar budget deficit at the State Capitol here, Dec. 4, about 25 members of the Minnesota Coalition for a People’s Bailout were outside the room chanting, “Hey politicians, here’s the fix! Tax the rich! Tax the rich!”

Calling the budget situation “ugly,” state economist Tom Stinson raised the possibility the economy could be entering its worst period since big recessions of the 1980s or the great depression of the 1930s.

Deb Koneche, of the MN Coalition for a People’s Bailout and the Welfare Rights Committee, talked to reporters outside the forecast presentation about fighting the effects of the crisis, stating “Low-income organizations, community groups, labor unions, immigrant rights organizations and others who are working for justice are coming together to meet the effects of the economic crisis head on. We cannot afford to allow the funding and programs that serve working and low-income families to be placed on the chopping block. We need solutions to the problems we face.” Members of the Welfare Rights Committee held a banner reading, “Bail out poor and working people, not billionaires.”

The MN Coalition for a People’s Bailout is pressing for legislation that would provide income and jobs to the unemployed, a moratorium on home foreclosures and evictions from foreclosures and measures to prevent layoffs to public employees. Together, these measures constitute a bailout for poor and working Minnesotans.

Thindwa called these 260 workers true heroes.

Coalition leaders vow to combat attempts to balance the budget on the backs of poor and working people, and will oppose any attacks on undocumented immigrant workers.

Phyllis Walker, a Coalition leader and president of AFSCME Local 3800 says, “We reject the notion that we all need to ‘tighten our belts,’ when our belts are already on the last notch. We also reject the notion that we ‘all have to suffer a little.’ We are already suffering too much. While the rich were enjoying their ‘tax relief,’ we have been living through rising unemployment, poverty and skyrocketing homelessness. Poor and working-class families did not cause the budget crisis and we should not have to pay for it.”

The Dec. 4 forecast presentation and protest was another round in what promises to be a tough battle at the capitol in 2009. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, who is politically close to the failed presidential candidate John McCain, has ordered state agencies to prepare for 10% spending cuts. The state legislative leadership (all Democrats) have not raised the possibility of taxing the wealthy or rolling back past corporate tax breaks.

“We fully expect that the governor and many legislators will be pushing for schemes to further impoverish Minnesotans’ people. We will not stand for it. We ‘forecast’ that working people and low-income people of Minnesota will fight them every step of the way. And AFSCME Local 3800, a partner in the MN Coalition for a People’s Bailout, will be in the forefront of that fight,” said Phyllis Walker.

**Broad Support for Republic Windows Occupation**

By Stephanie Weiner

Chicago, IL - Saturday, Dec. 6 brought more inspiration from workers sitting around the world.

at Republic Windows and Doors who are occupying their plant in Chicago. The workers’ union, Local 1110 of the United Electrical workers (UE), held a rally at noon outside the factory. By then, the workers’ militant action had already become international news.

Lalo Muñoz, a worker in the plant for 34 years, spoke to the rally and explained that they had just been given notice on Tuesday that the plant would close Friday. The company had no plans to pay them the 75 days pay required in the Illinois WARN Act, nor around them to protect them from the below zero temperatures.

Reverend CJ Hawking from the Hyde Park Community Church issues called up speaker after speaker to express the importance of the plant occupation for all workers across the U.S. Teamsters Local 743 President Richard Berg, AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Larry Spivak, SEIU Local 73 executive board member Joe Iosbaker, Michelle Aymold, an officer with the Graduate Employees Organization at UIC, Moses Zavala from UFCW, Martin Unzueta from The Chicago Workers Collaborative and Jobs with Justice director James Thindwa called these 260 workers true heroes.

Leaders from the United Electrical workers, Carl Rosen and Leah Fried, explained that the workers were told that Bank of America would not loan the company money. Bank of America denied the loan despite the $25 billion tax-payer bailout the bank had recently received. The 200 person crowd assembled on hours notice chanted, “You got bailed out, we got sold out!”

By the end of the rally, Congressman Luis Gutierrez promised to stick with them until they got justice. People left with concrete plans to return to the 1333 N Hickory Street factory with food, supplies, money, endorsements and ready to get more people for the planned Monday and Tuesday events.

Local 1110 President Armando Robles and his family spent the late afternoon explaining to Chicago activists the details and history of their struggle. As he walked into the packed room at the 17th annual People’s Thanksgiving fundraising dinner for Fight Back! newspaper, the ecstatic crowd chanted “Si se puede!”

The room included people from the disability rights group Access Living, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Southside Together Organized for Power, Sector Latino, the activist fan club of the Chicago Fire, SDS, Palestine Solidarity Group, National Lawyers Guild, Chicago Coalition Against War and Racism, and even the staff of the Venezuelan Consulate.

The crowd made it clear that the workers’ action on Friday had inspired folks far beyond the traditional labor movement. The fundraising bags circulating the room were filled as people came forward to put in $100 donations. After the event a group of 25 people drove to the factory to personally deliver the $1500 raised.

By late night the factory had numerous TV trucks parked outside and was busy with Mexican community members bringing in large silver pots of homemade soup through the barricaded front doors of the main plant - a plant filled with expensive equipment and merchandise. The workers had already developed their own food, housekeeping, security and media committees. Vicente Rangel, an union steward with 15 years in the plant, was on his way to a live CNN interview.
Chicago

Latino Community to UIC, ‘Keep the Doors Open’

By Joe Iosbaker

Chicago, IL - Hundreds of Latino students from the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) and Chicago high schools packed into the UIC Forum on Oct. 27 to defend their right to an education. The occasion was a hearing on the Status of Latinos at UIC held by the Illinois Latino Legislative Caucus.

Students were joined by community members, faculty and employees who turned out in response to an attack on the Latin American Recruitment and Education Services (LARES) program and other support services. LARES was created 33 years ago when there were only 100 Latino students enrolled at UIC. Through the struggles of the Latino communities for UIC to open its doors, plus the efforts of LARES, today there are 3300 Latino students.

However, that is the same number that was present here ten years ago. In the past decade, there has been further growth in the immigrant population in the Chicago area. Today, while 13% of UIC students are Latinos, almost 30% of Chicago is Latino. The Black student population has been declining compared to their percentages in the state and city as well, down to only 9% at UIC, while 35% of Chicago is Black.

LARES has seen its operating budget cut from over $100,000 a decade ago, to less than $10,000 this year. Now the state is threatening a ‘rescission’ of UIC’s overall budget. This would mean the legislature taking back funding. Chancellor Eric Gislason told the state legislators at the hearing that there will be a rescission and that it could be 5%. Other sources suggest it could be as much as 10%.

Gislason’s message to the hearing was that UIC is doing enough to help Latinos. Further, he said that he would not promise that LARES and other support programs would be spared when the cuts come down.

UIC Workers to Face Layoffs

Workers at UIC are also preparing for layoffs as the rescission deepens. Sirlena Perry, a clerical employee and union activist with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 73, responded, “The state should raise taxes on the rich, not cut back services to the working class and the poor.” She expressed the feeling of many union workers here. “They can’t just balance their budget on the backs of the workers - if there are cuts, management should take the first and the deepest.”

Illinois has one of the lowest rates of taxation of the wealthy of any state in the U.S. Over the years of deregulation of the stock market, the richest 1% in the country has made enormous wealth. Now their greed has caused the biggest crisis since the Great Depression. Then, when Wall Street was in trouble, the U.S. Congress bailed them out with billions.

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UIC, continued on page 7

North Carolina protests raids by ICE and racial profiling by local police.

Los Angeles, CA - Students and their families gathered here Oct. 10 to oppose raids on the undocumented by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Chants included demands for equal rights and full equality now, to stop racist raids, detentions and deportations and for the defeat of John McCain.

Said veteran Chicano activist Carlos Montes, “This protest was very important because it shows that the whole community is angry with the ICE repression and is willing to fight back and stand up for their families and demand equality.”

The protest was led by the Chicano Student Club, El Sereno Middle School and supported by Latinos Against War. It was held in solidarity with the national Ya Basta call and International Indigenous Peoples Day.

Los Angeles, CA - Students and families protest raids and deportations

By staff

North Carolina protests raids by ICE and racial profiling by local police.
Protesters confronted the rally chanting: “McCain in the November elections.” Anti-McCain/Palin protesters were organized by the local progressives and radicals. Anti-McCain/Palin protesters baiting and red-baiting were not tolerated. Protesters “baby killers,” told them to “get out,” and shouted “socialist!” Signs expressing their dissatisfaction with the McCain/Palin ticket.

In the last couple weeks before the elections, Palin and her ultra-conservative base have stepped up and amplified attacks against Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. He has been accused by the McCain/Palin campaign of being a “terrorist” and a “socialist.” Others call Obama a Muslim black radical and have cried out for his assassination at rallies.

The Palin rally in Asheville was mostly attended by white male out-of-towners. Some of her supporters called protesters “baby killers,” told them to “get a job,” and shouted “socialist!” Signs out of two windows in an apartment building next to the Civic Center taunted, “KKK for Palin.”

Palin’s attempt to stir up racism, race-baiting and red-baiting were not tolerated by the local progressives and radicals. Anti-McCain/Palin protesters and Obama supporters united against the Republican agenda by demanding an end to the war and to defeat John McCain in the November elections.

Protesters confronted the rally chanting, “Palin go home!” and “No more of the same! Vote against McCain!” throughout afternoon and into the evening. Protesters also called for an end to hate speech and anti-women attacks - some women calling Palin a traitor. Still others in transit and teachers unions raised support the Employee Free Choice Act and health care for all.

Protesters also say the Palin protest brought a more radical consciousness to Obama supporters and progressives. With only a few days notice, SDSers got the word out and turned up the heat against a failing campaign based on racism, fear-mongering and anti-socialist rhetoric. The Stop the War, Stop McCain national campaign in SDS urged all progressives, radicals and revolutionaries to vote against the McCain/Palin ticket.

John McCain and Sarah Palin were headed to Cedarburg, Wisconsin, a Republican stronghold town of 11,000. During the civil forum McCain reiterated his plans to defeat this evil with the bloodshed of American soldiers and Iraqi civilians. And it is for this reason that I am going join the protesters in Saint Paul, Minnesota to let the Republicans know that we will not stand for this platform of war.

Charla Schlueter is a member of UNCA-SDS.

NORTH CAROLINA

Students and Workers Confront Palin Rally

By Doug Michel

Asheville, NC - When members of the University of North Carolina - Asheville Students for a Democratic Society (UNC-Asheville SDS) heard that Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin was coming to hold one of her Lynch mob style rallies in Asheville, there was no question of organizing a protest. Workers, students and members of the Asheville community assembled outside of the Civic Center downtown. On Oct. 26, there was an outpouring of over 300 protesters who confronted Palin and her rally of supporters.

In the last couple weeks before the elections, Palin and her ultra-conservative base have stepped up and amplified attacks against Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. He has been accused by the McCain/Palin campaign of being a “terrorist” and a “socialist.” Others call Obama a Muslim black radical and have cried out for his assassination at rallies.

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Progressive Students of Milwaukee Protest the McCain/Palin Agenda

By Daniel Ginsberg-Jaeckle

Cedarburg, WI - One day after the protests against the Republican National Convention in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Sept. 5, members of the Progressive Students of Milwaukee caught wind that Republican presidential and vice-presidential candidates are actively against a McCain/Palin Agenda.

John McCain and Sarah Palin were headed to Cedarburg, Wisconsin, a Republican stronghold town of 11,000. During the civil forum McCain reiterated his plans to defeat this evil with the bloodshed of American soldiers and Iraqi civilians. And it is for this reason that I am going join the protesters in Saint Paul, Minnesota to let the Republicans know that we will not stand for this platform of war.

Charla Schlueter is a member of UNCA-SDS.

Progressive Students of Milwaukee march against McCain.

There were police at every corner and a double row of fencing surrounded the event. Snipers held rooftop positions and a Secret Service agent approached the students within minutes of them arriving to town. The Republican protest had arrived in small town America. The students marched down the street despite the official hostility to protesters. They eventually stood with their banner propped up behind the walled-off rally area near the press tent. The students later appeared on two local TV channels and three radio stations, expressing their dissatisfaction with McCain and Palin’s support for the wars and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the downturn in the economy.

300 protested Sarah Palin during a rally in Asheville, North Carolina.
Anti-war protests at the RNC

No war! No war! No war!

By Freedom Road Socialist Organization

The tens of thousands of RNC protestors who hit the streets of Saint Paul Sept. 1 - 4 did something that was truly great. The demonstrations sent a powerful message that was heard around the world: The people of the United States reject the war on Iraq and the Republican agenda. We insist on peace, justice and equality. This message was heard by the rich and powerful, who responded with repression. And it was heard by hundreds of millions of people. Reports of the protests were carried by thousands of media outlets ranging from network TV in the U.S. to Al Jazeera to the New China News Agency. The Sept. 1 rally against the war was carried live on C-SPAN.

The demonstrations that took place on the first and last days of the RNC were of particular importance. The size, scope, militancy and the political clarity - crystallized in the slogan “U.S. out of Iraq now” - helped to create the political context for the entire week of actions against the RNC.

September 1

On Sept. 1, 30,000 people from across the United States participated in the massive anti-war march organized by the Coalition to March on the RNC and Stop the War. It was an incredible outpouring against the war and injustice. Low-income people marched under the slogan, “Money for human needs, not for war.” An immigrant rights contingent called for an end to raids and deportations and full equality for the undocumented. Hundreds from the Somali community formed a contingent demanding an end to the U.S-backed Ethiopian occupation of Somalia. Other contingents included supporters of Palestine, veterans, trade unionists and students. Together the contingents made a strong statement that the people of this country reject the war, John McCain and the Republican agenda as whole.

In addition, the Sept. 1 protest stands as positive example of how to unite all who can be united in a down-to-earth and practical manner. The Coalition to March on the RNC and Stop the War was able to bring together more than 130 organizations for the Sept. 1 march, including the three main anti-war coalitions in the U.S. - United for Peace and Justice, Troops Out Now Coalition and International ANSWER.

Several things made it possible to build this broad front for the Sept. 1 protest. First, the political basis of unity was focused enough to bring forces together, yet general enough to encompass the demands and concerns of other people’s movements. Second, organizers of the Coalition were able to reach an agreement with the organizers of other protests which allowed for a separation of time or space between different forces that had different kinds of actions planned. It was agreed that there would be no public denunciations or criticisms of plans or projects of those on the streets against the RNC. On the organizational level, a flexible and consultative approach was utilized by the march organizers. This served to consolidate the Coalition partners and draw into more forces. And finally, on a tactical level, march organizers waged a determined fight to get permits and promoted a march with a mass character. The word tactical is used here because the decision to get permits is a question of tactics, as opposed to of strategy or principle. In this particular case, obtaining permits was helpful in uniting as many as possible for the largest protest possible.

The huge turnout on Sept. 1 reflects the courage and determination of each and every person who attended. City officials not only created a climate of fear, but as events leading up to the convention and over the four days would show, the cops did their best to make sure that there would be something to be afraid of.

Coalition organizers waged a two-year fight to get permits for the march. Saint Paul officials from the convergence center of RNC protests at the RNC, they immediately denounced these attempts to suppress protest at the RNC.

Following the Sept. 1 march, a series of militant actions took place in downtown Saint Paul, with the aim of shutting down the RNC. Freedom Road sees these actions as a good thing that helped make the four days of protest at the RNC a success.

September 4

On the final day of the RNC, hours before John McCain was to accept the nomination of the Republican Party, several thousand gathered at the Minnesota State Capitol Building for a protest initiated by the Twin Cities-based Anti-War Committee. The plan was to march on the Xcel Center under the slogan, “No peace for the war makers.”

From the beginning, police did everything possible to disrupt and stop the protest. Justice Department representatives stood near the stage uttering threats. Cops on bicycles carried out arrests and provocations while a band was playing before the rally. Shortly before the rally ended, more than 100 cops in riot gear massed behind the stage.

Far from being intimidated, leaders of the Anti-War Committee marched towards the Xcel Center, where hundreds of riot cops, some on horse back, others on bicycles and others using snowplows as barricades blocked the way. After a mass arrest that took much of the leadership of the protest out of commission, others from the anti-war, welfare rights and immigrants rights movements stepped forward and kept the march going. The march ended in a barrage of tear gas, concussion grenades and more mass arrests. By the end of the evening almost 400 participants in the Sept. 4 march were jailed.

This demonstration was significant on several counts. First, it was both mass
and militant. Organizers made it clear they would march with or without a permit. Second, the protest pulled the spotlight off the pro-war message of McCain. Before and after his speech, TV coverage cut back and forth between the clashes on the streets of Saint Paul and events inside the Xcel Center.

While paling beside the really significant things that happened Sept. 4, it needs to be said that a handful of people failed the test that the RNC provided our movement. The first to fail was the so-called ‘Peace Team.’ Made up of some honest people from the peace movement, its goal of staying ‘neutral’ during the protest led them to go over to the side of the cops. On day four, they repeatedly were the ones who conveyed dispersal orders from the police. The second group that failed was Socialist Alternative, which did everything they could to undermine the day four protest, and are now running around denouncing militancy at the RNC.

Where do we go from here

In the months ahead it is important to build on the successes of the RNC protests. The Republicans and their agenda of war, racism and reaction received a solid blow. More things like this are needed.

There is also the job of defending the nearly 800 protesters who were arrested in the course of the Convention. Of special importance is the RNC 8. The eight face conspiracy charges with enhanced penalties based on the Minnesota version of the Patriot Act. All progressive people should support the demand that charges be dropped against all RNC protesters. Without exception.

The Sept. 1 anti-war protest demonstrated that the possibility exists to build real and principled unity in the anti-war movement with the aim of carrying out joint actions to end U.S. occupations.

At the Sept. 4 protest several standoffs took place with police in full riot gear as demonstrators attempted to march to the Xcel Center to confront John McCain. By day’s end 400 were arrested.

13% of UIC students are Latinos, almost 30% of Chicago is Latino.
**EDITORIALS**

**Mc Cain: Down in Flames!**

By Freedom Road Socialist Organization

Americans are celebrating the defeat of warmonger and angry rich guy John McCain. The voters wanted to put an end to war, lies and corruption. Many correctly saw McCain as the continuation of Bush’s failed policies, so education; to social security. The social movements were very much on the defensive and fighting off attacks. We will need to continue to invest ourselves in movements for social change, but the political atmosphere will be different.

The big shift for the Republicans came not at home, but over in Iraq. The Iraqi resistance fought with their lives to defeat the Bush/Cheney plans for domination and oil profits. This stopped Bush and the Republican agenda dead in their tracks on the home front too. There were no more big attempts to roll back the reforms like Social Security, which working people won decades ago. For people at home and abroad, the defeat of McCain represents the American people’s rejection of the ‘Bush doctrine’ and the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Across America, African American people and others are noisily celebrating the victory of Barack Obama, the first Black president. Did you see the victory celebration in Chicago? A great pride is bursting forth from African American communities and throughout the Black Belt South. African Americans are not alone in their joy either; all types of people are doing fist bumps and feeling good. Other oppressed nationalities that suffered racism and discrimination - Chicanos and Mestizos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans and Asian- Americans are sharing the moment. Obama’s election represents a blow against racism and white chauvinism.

Obama’s victory is stunning and it also brings in the same benefit to the Democratic party. It builds on elections two years ago when the Republicans suffered defeat and lost congressional majorities to the Democrats. The Democrats swept this election too, making their majorities stronger. The Democrats will truly rule – hardly needing to consult with the Republicans to pass legislation.

There is a problem however, and it is not that one party is too strong. The problem is that the Democrats are the other party of big business. The Democrats are favored at this time by the billionaires and millionaires who actually rule the U.S. The wealthy elite holds the U.S. through that two-party system. It is true there is competition, but elections are largely predicted by who has the most money from the rich people. The defeat of the Republicans certainly marks a big shift, but it does not fundamentally alter the system or challenge the rule of the rich. The Democrats are the party of the $700 billion bailout for banks and the millions of people to save bankers. The Democrats are the party that could have cut war funding and brought the troops home already. A million Iraqis are dead and the Democrats continue to fund the occupation.

So we need to continue the motion that defeated McCain and delivered the White House for Barack Obama. We need to build an understanding that a vocal, independent and active anti-war movement will be needed to bring ALL the troops home now. We need to bring the immigrants’ rights movement into the streets again, defeating both fear and the dreaded deportations that are breaking apart families. We need to move the immigrants’ rights movement into the streets again, defeating both fear and the dreaded deportations that are breaking apart families. We need to move legal and skillful workers so can workers win legislation to make forming unions a simple democratic process with the right to strike.

Who gets elected is important, but it is not the only important battle. Voting for a new president will make history. We cannot just return to our living rooms to watch the History Channel. We must build every movement that demands peace, justice, equality and liberation.

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**Reflections on elections and Proposition 8**

By Naomi Nakamura

Berkeley, CA - Tuesday, Nov. 4, was a bittersweet evening for me. The sweet- ness came first, as I was driving my daughter home from a play rehearsal when I heard that Barack Obama had won the election for President of the United States. Later that evening the feeling faded as I watched the news showing that California Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage, was heading towards a narrow victory.

While I was too young to participate in the Civil Rights movement, I can remember the racial segregation that was commonplace in California in the early 1960s. I remember my parents complaining about the realtor who kept three lists of homes for sale – one for whites, one for Blacks, and one for “other” (meaning Asian Americans); and how an Asian American high school friend of mine told me how her parents were visited by racist neighbors who offered to buy them out of their home in a formerly all-white neighborhood. When a Jewish synagogue was built in our neighbor- hood, flyers appeared on our porch in protest. I went with one of my best friends to march with the African American to an all-Black swimming pool since many pools had banned Blacks. And I still remember my father’s quote after having to walk out of a restaurant that sat us for dinner and then acted if we weren’t there and refused to take our order.

Until Barack Obama won the Iowa Democratic caucus in January, I never thought that the United States would elect an African American as president in my lifetime. Despite the growing number of high-profile Blacks in the government, military and corporate world, I could see the government and corporate world. I could see the government and corporate world. I could see the government and corporate world. I could see the government and corporate world. I could see the government and corporate world.

Many (including myself) worried about the so-called ‘Bradley effect,’ named after former Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley. Bradley, who was African American, was ahead in many polls in his campaign for governor of California in 1982, but lost to a white candidate. While there was little of this evident in the presidential campaign, and not enough to swing the election, there did seem to a ‘Bradley effect’ at work in Proposition 8. While polls showed a narrow defeat for the same-sex marriage ban, it passed by a narrow margin (55% to 44%). When Californians were willing to elect a Black president by a large margin (61% to 37%), they were not able to back equality of marriage the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community.

I was shocked to hear supporters of Proposition 8, some of whom were from oppressed nationalities, use the same reasoning as the segregationists of the 1950s and 1960s. They railed at the Buttom of the U.S. through that two-party system. It is true there is competition, but elections are largely predicted by who has the most money from the rich people. The defeat of the Republicans certainly marks a big shift, but it does not fundamentally alter the system or challenge the rule of the rich. The Democrats are the party of the $700 billion bailout for banks and the millions of people to save bankers. The Democrats are the party that could have cut war funding and brought the troops home already. A million Iraqis are dead and the Democrats continue to fund the occupation.

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Still, progressives did make gains in that the margin of defeat (4%) was much smaller than another same-sex marriage ban that passed in California just eight years ago by a 22% margin. Supporters of marriage equality have filed lawsuits against Proposition 8, arguing that it was actually a constitu- tional revision (that is to say a funda- mental change, that needs passage by three-fifths of the legislature and not an amendment). While I support this move (which I read of in the local paper), I do not think we can rely solely on the courts. I have been heartened by the mass protests following the passage of Proposition 8. I have seen young people, who repre- sent the future, get involved and politi- cally active. I am happy that my mid- dle-aged daughter is talking about any campaign talking about the issues. I am confident of victory.

No HR! Overturn 8!
Huge protest against ‘School of Assassins’

By staff

Columbus, GA - Over 20,000 people from across the country flooded Fort Benning on the Nov. 22-23 weekend, calling for the School of the Americas (SOA), a U.S. military training institute that trains Latin American soldiers in ‘counter-insurgency techniques’, to be shut down. During the vigil to honor the memory of the thousands of men, women and children that have been tortured, kidnapped and murdered at the SOA, the message, was clear, in an act of civil disobedience, crossed onto the military base and were arrest ed. They face up to six months in federal prison for taking action to close down the SOA - the ‘School of Assassins.’

Throughout the weekend, groups that organize in solidarity with Colombia emphasized the need for people in the U.S. to take action to stop the U.S. government’s support for war and repression in Colombia.

Colombia is particularly affected by both the SOA and U.S. foreign policy. Colombia sends more soldiers to the SOA than any other country. Under aid packages such as Plan Colombia, Colombia receives billions of dollars from the United States. It is no coincidence that the worst human rights records in the hemisphere, with over 40 Colombian trade unionists killed this year alone.

Charla Schlueter, a member of the University of North Carolina at Asheville chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, spoke at the School of American demonstration.

Colombia, by contrast, has experienced a wave of far-right military and political repression. The military has systematically killed, tortured and kidnapped labor and political leaders, as well as intellectuals and social activists. A large part of this repression is connected to a wave of assassinations by the paramilitary group, Los Paisas. This group, which is essentially organized and financed by the U.S. government, is responsible for the disappearance of social workers, peasants and leaders of social movements.

Schlueter is a native of Colombia and a political prisoner in a jail cell in Bogota. She calls for solidarity and says, “People in the U.S. should put the above everything else.”

Vast numbers of Israelis responded angrily to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) signed between the United States government and their local allies in the Green Zone. The SOFA will provide a legal basis to continue the U.S. occupation of Iraq when the United Nations Security Council mandate for the occupation expires on Dec. 31, 2008. Hundreds of thousands protested before the agreement was signed and protests are set to continue as the SOFA legislation heads to the puppet parliament for final approval.

The Iraqi resistance has also intensified its attacks on the U.S. military and at times cooperated with the U.S. military and at times cooperated with the U.S. military. The U.S. military is very clear on this point.

“Three years is a long time. Conditions could change in that period of time,” said Admiral Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in playing down the significance of withdrawal dates. “And, if we get to a point where this SOFA is agreed to, and have a relationship with the government of Iraq tied to it, that we will continue to have discussions with them over time, as conditions continue to evolve.

The U.S. and the occupation government’s Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, are declaring the SOFA as a victory for Iraqi sovereignty. It is true that the agreement would require Joint Committees to be established between the Green Zone government and the U.S. military to address issues of security. But the text of the agreement is meaningless when one considers how unequal the partners to it are. In reality the agreement furthers erodes Iraqi sovereignty and ensures the continued domination of Iraq by the U.S. and their local Iraqi allies, based in the Green Zone of Baghdad. It ensures the United States will remain for at least another three years and potentially much longer.

Popular movement demands

“U.S. out now”

An estimated 150,000 Iraqis took to the streets Oct. 18 to rally against the draft agreement. Resentment and anger at the occupation and its local allies runs high among Iraqis. Sameer al-Rashid, a civil servant, told the Iraqi newspaper Azzaman, “How do you expect me to accept signing a security agreement with someone who has occupied my country? What security the U.S. can bring to us after all the calamities we have passed through?” Another Iraqi, Abdullah Karim, said, “If the agreement is signed, no only the Sadr movement will use arms but so will all the Iraqi resistance groups, both Shiite and Sunni.” (Washington Post, Nov. 15)

With a vote in the puppet parliament set for Nov. 15, U.S. forces will be on Iraq. The people of Iraq have spoken decisively against the agreement and demanded the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces. The one test of Iraqi sovereignty does not lie in passing the SOFA, but in its rejection. The U.S. military cannot be the judge; the U.S. must also intensify its work in demanding the immediate end to the unjust occupation of Iraq.
**Los Angeles**

Estudiantes y familias protestan contra las redadas y deportaciones

Por redacción

Los Angeles, CA – Se reunieron aquí estudiantes y sus familias el 10 de octubre para oponerse a las redadas de la agencia de inmigración (ICE, por sus siglas en inglés) en contra de los indocumentados, gritaron consignas exigiendo derechos iguales, un alto a las redadas racistas, detenciones, las deportaciones y la derrota de John McCain.

El activista chicano Carlos Montes dijo, “Esta manifestación fue muy importante porque muestra que la comunidad entera está en contra de la represión de ICE y está lista para luchar y defender a sus familias y exigir igualdad.”

La protesta fue dirigida por el grupo de Estudiantes Chicanos de la escuela El Sereno y apoyada por Latinos Contra la Guerra. Se hizo en solidaridad con el llamado nacional ‘Ya Basta’ y el Día Internacional de los Pueblos Indígenas.

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¡Que paguen los ricos!

Economía, continuó de página 12

talistas abandonando su retórica del libre mercado y exigiendo más regulaciones y dinero del gobierno para ayudar a salvar su sistema financiero. No tenemos ningún problema de principios con la intervención del gobierno en la economía. Pero no tenemos que notar la hipocresía de la administración de Bush que se opuso a gastar unos pocos billones más para la salud de trabajadores de bajos ingresos, que se opuso a extender el seguro de desempleo para los trabajadores despedidos y que redujo gastar un centavo para ayudar a las familias que perdían sus casas por las ejecuciones hipotecarias de viviendas. Pero cuando los bancos grandes y compañías de seguro tienen problemas, de repente cientos de billones de dólares están disponibles.

Esta crisis ha dejado clara la dependencia de los Estados Unidos en el capital extranjero para mantener la economía. El tomo de control de Fannie Mae y Freddie Mac por parte del gobierno fue en parte para calmar los temores de otros países, que les han prestado a Fannie y Freddie más de $1.5 trillones. La administración de Bush tiene que prestar más de $300 billones sólo en noviembre y diciembre para el rescate, con la may- oría de estos préstamos procediendo de otros países.

En cara a los crecientes recortes presupuestarios a nivel estatal y local, nuestra enfoque tiene que estar en construir un movimiento que puede luchar para las necesidades de la gente: fondos para las escuelas, salud para todos, trabajos e impuestos para pagar el seguro a los bancos y otros contratos financieros.

Necesitamos una extensión de los beneficios para los desempleados y necesitamos programas del gobierno para crear trabajos. Necesitamos un sistema de salud universal que eliminaría a las compañías costosas de seguro y que forzaría a las compañías farmacéuticas grandes a bajar sus precios.

La crisis ha dejado más claro que nunca que los partidos republicano y demócrata son partidos de los grandes negocios. Los dos partidos y sus candidatos presidenciales apoyo- ron regular $700 billones de dólares a los bancos y billonarios. Pero después de haber dicho eso, tenemos que entender que la derrota de los republicanos en la elección fue un repudio de su política de quitar las regulaciones sobre la economía hacia la crisis y un repudio también por las guerras que iniciaron. Una indignación masiva y popular tenía suficiente fuerza para der- rotar el plan de regular bilones de dólares a los bancos, por lo menos al principio. Necesitamos un movimiento popular bien organizado y masivo que pueda presionar a los demócratas que ahora tienen el poder para que apuyen más reformas que beneficien a los trabajadores. Al mismo tiempo necesitamos mostrar a la gente que el partido demócrata no está a favor de cambio económico real, sólo con el socialismo podemos lograr cambio económico real.

¡Que mantengan las puertas abiertas!

De la comunidad latina a la UIC:

Por Joe Ishohnke

Los estudiantes vistieron camisetas que decían “LARES – mantengan las puertas abiertas”

Cientos de estudiantes latinos de la Universidad de Illinois – Chicago (UIC) y de las escuelas secundarias de Chicago aboraron el Foro del 27 de octubre en la UIC para defender sus derechos a la educación. El evento fue una audiencia sobre el estatus de los latinos en la UIC auspiciado por la Illinois Latino Legislative Caucus (Camara legislativa latina).

A los estudiantes se les unieron miembros de la comunidad, la facul- dad y los empleados quienes salieron en respuesta al ataque al programa de Latin American Recruitment and Education Services (LARES) y otros servicios de apoyo. LARES fue crea- do hace 33 años cuando solo había 100 estudiantes latinos inscritos en la UIC. Por medio de las luchas de las comunidades latinas para que la UIC abriera sus puertas, los esfuerzos de LARES, actualmente hay 3300 estudiantes latinos.

Sin embargo, ese es el mismo número que fue presentado 10 años atrás. En la década pasada, ha habido un rápido crecimiento en la población inmigrante en el área de Chicago. Hoy, mientras que 13% de los estudiantes de la UIC son latinos, casi 30% de Chicago es una población negra ha ido decl- imando comparada al porcentaje en el estado y la ciudad, bajó a solo 9% en la UIC, mientras que 35% de la población en Chicago es negra. LARES ha visto su presupuesto recor- tado desde hace una década por encima de $100,000.00, a menos de $10.000.00 este año. Ahora el estado está amenazando con una anulación general del presupuesto de la UIC. Esto significaría que la legislatura reti- raría el presupuesto. El rector Eric Gislason dijo a los legisladores estatales en la audiencia que habría una recisión y que podría ser del 5%. Otras fuentes sugieren que podría ser de hasta el 10%.

El mensaje de Gislason a la audiencia es que la UIC está haciendo (más que) suficiente para ayudar a los latinos. Adicionalmente, dijo que no permitía que LARES y otros programas de apoyo no sufriremos cuando los cortes toman lugar.

LAUI trabajo en la UIC también se están preparando para las bajas cuan- do la recesión tome lugar. Srílanka Perry, una trabajadora administrativa y activista sindical del Local 73 de la Service Employees International Union (SEIU), impugnó, “el estado debe subir los impuestos a los ricos, no recortar servicios a la clase traba- jadora y a los pobres.” Ella manifestó los sentimientos de muchos traba- jadores sindicales presentes. “Ellos no pueden balancear su presupuesto a costa de los trabajadores – si hay recortes, la gerencia debe tomar el primero y el mayor.”

Illinois tiene una de las tarifas tribu- tarias más bajas que cualquier otro estado en los EU. A partir de la des regulación de la bolsa de valores, el 1% de los ricos en el país han hecho enormes fortunas. Ahora su avaricia ha causado la mayor crisis desde la Gran depresión. Entonces, cuando el Congreso de EU los sacó de proble- mas con trillones de dólares. Sin embargo, la gente trabajadora se le niega la ayuda cuando ellos enfrentan el fracaso de sus hogares.

Ahora la crisis financiera causará a los trabajadores, incluyendo a los de la UIC, el perder sus trabajos. Los traba- jadores latinos y negros son los más lastimados. Ellos han tenido que luchar contra la discriminación racial para conseguir igualdad de salarios con los trabajadores blancos en el campus de Urbana.

John Ayala, técnico de man- tenimiento de la UIC quien habló en las audiencias, refiriéndose al aumento de contratación de latinos, indicó que, “la mayoría de latinos son empleados en los trabajos peor pagados.”

La movilización en esta audiencia fue bastante extensa. Los presentes dijeron que el rector estaba visiblemente per- turbado por las declaraciones y la dis- posición de la multitud.

El hermano Ayala indicó que harán falta más luchas para que los traba- jadores avancen en su causa.

“Teniendo ésta y futuras audiencias podría ser la única forma de hacer que la UIC respete a la comunidad latina y dará esperanza a muchos traba- jadores desanimados.”

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Economía en crisis

Comentario de los editores de ¡Lucha y Resiste!

Dos años después del inicio de la crisis financiera actual, la economía ha padecido de mal a peor. Lo que empezó con el fracaso de pequeñas compañías hipotecarias ahora se ha convertido ya en una crisis en la que han caído bancos de inversiones de Wall Street, las compañías hipotecarias más grandes del mundo y el mercado de valores. Los bancos tienen que tomar acciones más y más grandes para intentar estabilizar la crisis. La crisis financiera de 1929, que se comenzó alrededor de 300 billones de dólares en 'reserva excesa' que podrían estar prestando en lugar de ahorrándolo.

Casi todo el mundo reconoce que las políticas de libre mercado de la administración de Bush y del ex-jefe de la reserva federal Alan Greenspan contribuyeron a la crisis financiera actual. Pero las raíces de la crisis van más allá de las políticas de Bush y Greenspan. El sistema económico del capitalismo monopolista es la causa de la crisis actual. Hoy en día, corporaciones multinacionales gigantes que tienen la capacidad de producir más productos que de puedan vender dominan la economía mundial. Hasta con la publicidad que invaden a cada rincón de nuestras vidas y con el acceso fácil al crédito, estas corporaciones pueden producir más carros, acero, aviones, etc. de lo que es posible vender.

Los negocios estadounidenses han atacado a los sindicatos por 25 años, haciendo más fácil cortar sueldos y beneficios de los trabajadores. Sus esfuerzos de influir el congreso han resultado en recortes de la asistencia pública, el salario mínimo y beneficios de desempleo, forzando más y más a que los trabajadores acepten trabajos de bajo salario. Exploitan sin pena a los trabajadores por integrar su nuevo, hasta los niños, y llaman al departamento de inmigración (ICE) si los trabajadores inmigrantes luchan o resisten. Las corporaciones mandan su trabajo a otros países, eliminando trabajos mejor pagados aquí en los Estados Unidos. Al mismo tiempo los trabajadores en Asia y Latinoamérica ganan solo una fracción del salario de lo que estos mismos trabajos pagan en los Estados Unidos.

Mientras eso trae ganancias más grandes para un pequeño grupo de los más ricos, para las masas de trabajadores significa que ellos no pueden comprar lo que han producido. Eso no es el resultado de ejecutivos con avaricia (aunque hay muchos de ellos). Es el resultado de un esfuerzo de obtener ganancias, lo cual es una parte integral del capitalismo. Bajo un sistema económico capitalista, la producción es social, con cientos de miles de trabajadores contribuyendo a la producción, la distribución y la venta de productos y servicios, mientras la maquinaria de producción (fábricas, transportes y tiendas) tiene dueños privados en el que las ganancias van a una clase pequeña capitalista. Esta tradición es la raíz de la crisis económica del capitalismo.

Con la falta de oportunidades de invertir en la producción de productos y servicios, las ganancias han ido al sector financiero, el cual ha crecido como un cáncer en los últimos 30 años. Hoy en día hay más de $600 billones en derivativas financieras como las "Obligaciones Collateralizadas de Deuda" (CDO por sus siglas en inglés), que tienen un valor 40 veces más grande que la economía entera estadounidense. Los bancos y las corporaciones también están tomando ventaja del dinero del gobierno para tomar control de sus competidores, y eso aumenta aún más la concentración del poder económico en las manos de pocas compañías. Ahora los cuatro bancos estadounidenses más grandes controlan más de la mitad de todos los depósitos. Grandes compañías estadounidenses siguen invirtiendo capital en otros países. La misma semana que GM dijo que ya no iba a tener nada del dinero en efectivo exigió $50 billones más en préstamos del gobierno, ¡abrieron una fábrica nueva en Rusia! Hoy el péndulo regresa, con los biliares y grupos en las manos de los trabajadores, y estamos en una crisis de la economía capitalista.

Por Mick Kelly

MINNESOTA

Luchando contra el impacto de la crisis económica

St Paul, MN – Frente a una pancarta que dice, “Rescate del pueblo pobre y trabajador – No a los bilionarios!” las lideresas del Comité por el Derecho de Asistencia Pública anunciaron una campaña para combate el impacto de la cronicidad económica en una conferencia de prensa el 29 de octubre. Acompañándolos en la actividad se hicieron presentes miembros del sindicato de oficinistas AFSCME 3800, el Comité Anti-guerra, Mujeres en Contra de la Militarización y otros grupos que luchan por la paz y la justicia.

Tasha Jackson, miembro del Comité por los Derechos de la Asistencia Pública explicó, “Hoy, el 29 de octubre, es el aniversario del del asesinato de John Steuart en el año 1929 – o sea, el comienzo de la Gran Depresión. Estamos aquí en el Capitolio de Minnesota, como gente pobre y trabajadora, exigiendo que el Gobernador Pawlenty y los políticos estatales enfrenten la crisis que está pasando ahora y afecta a nuestras familias en Minnesota.”

Minnesota tiene un déficit presupuestal de casi mil millones de dólares. Observadores creen que la crisis financiera crecerá en los meses que vienen. En el pasado el estado de